

Law and Covenant- week 2- part 1

Torah = the Pentateuch = the law of Moses

Who wrote the first 5 books of the Bible?

(Authorship- Moses vs. JEDPR)

1. What is the 'Law'?

The law was God's gift to help them to live with each other, and relate to Him.

'Law' as used in the Bible- def.

1. Laws counted by the Pharisees (613)
2. The first 5 books of the Bible
3. Refers to the entire Old Testament system

2. How does the laws of the Old Testament apply to Christians today?

Key categories that laws of the Old Testament fall into...

1. Civil laws- these were specifically for Israel as a nation
2. Ritual or Ceremonial laws- again specifically for Israel in their worship
3. Laws that were for their health- dietary laws
4. Things that were part of that time and culture (careful with this one)
5. Moral laws- Principles that still apply- God has not changed
6. Laws that were specifically renewed in the New Testament- the 10 commandments, the Shema (the Lord God is one, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself)

Activity- what category would the following law fall into?

Deut 6:5, Lev 19:19, Deut 22:6-7, Deut 22:8,
Num 15:38, Exodus 23:10-11, Deut 5:19, Exodus
23:14, Lev 12:2-3, Lev 11:4, Lev 11:27, Lev 3:17,
Lev 19:27, Lev 19:28, Lev 23:3, Lev 18:22

God works with his people differently at different times.

‘The moral baseline of the human race’

3,000 years ago babies were often sacrificed to Molech. Slaves were regularly killed with no accountability. Women were treated as possessions.

What development can you see in the Bible over the following issues?

Divorce

Polygamy

Slavery

Women treated as property

3. What was the 'law' to Israel?

It is critical to understand the role of covenant to the people of Israel

Covenant- def.- bond unites people in mutual obligations

Boils down to one promise...

I will be your God and you will be my people
(the covenants spell the details of this out)

Adamic Covenant- (not called a covenant)

Noahaic Covenant- Genesis 9:8-11

Abrahamic Covenant- in place of the curses there will be blessings- land, nation, promise of blessing, and it will affect the whole world-
Genesis 12:2-3, Gen 15- sacrifice, Gen 17- circumcision as a sign

Mosaic Covenant- Sinai Covenant- Exodus 19:1-6- Sacrifices are made and a law code is given

Davidic Covenant- 2 Samuel 7:4-16- No sacrifice made... but fits in with other covenants

New Covenant- Jere 31, Ezekiel 11, Ezekiel 36- Many differences from previous covenants

3 Key things to know about the covenants

1. They are entirely God's initiative- God chooses and saves first... and obedience comes out of that
2. Showed God's unconditional love for his people- becomes complicated as they become disobedient
3. The covenants call for response and obedience- blessings are promised

Around tables- What is the difference between a marriage and a business covenant? Is the covenant God makes with his people more like a marriage covenant, or a business covenant?

Jesus fulfils all the promises of the covenants (important to read the whole Bible in light of the BIG picture)

Interpreting OT Narrative- week 2- part 2

Turn into groups- What is a story that you find significant? It could be a movie, book, children's story, etc.

Narrative in the Bible

Over 40% of the OT is narrative

Most common type of literature in the Bible is narrative

OT books nearly entirely narrative- Gen, Josh, Judges, Ruth, 1 Sam, 2 Sam, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chron, 2 Chron, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Jonah, and Haggai

OT books that have substantial sections of narrative- Exo, Num, Jeremiah, Ezek, Isa, and Job

NT- large parts of the gospels, and almost all of Acts

What is so powerful about story that the narrative form would be used so much?

3 levels

Top level- Grand Narrative- creation, fall, power of sin, need for redemption, Christ's incarnation/ sacrifice/ and resurrection and the end of time

Middle level- Israel and the church- call of Abraham, the patriarchs, captivity in Egypt, God's deliverance, conquest of the promised land, the wanderings in the desert, the establishment of the nation of Israel, the split into North and south, exile, restoration, etc.

Bottom level- Individual narratives

Any story in itself is essentially part of the bigger story and the grand narrative.

What OT narratives are not...

1. They are not just stories about people.
2. OT narratives are not allegories filled with hidden meanings.
3. OT narratives generally do not teach with the clarity of an epistle.
4. The moral of the story is not always apparent.

Features of Hebrew Narrative

1. Narrator
2. Scenes
3. Characters
4. Dialogue
5. Plot
6. Structure

The Limitations of OT Narrative

10 principles for interpreting narrative (from How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart)

1. An OT narrative usually does not directly teach a doctrine.
2. An OT narrative usually illustrates a doctrine or doctrines taught propositionally elsewhere. (Joseph – divine providence)
3. Narratives record what happened- not necessarily what should have happened or what ought to happen every time.
4. What people do in narratives is not necessarily a good example for us. Frequently, it is just the opposite.
5. Most of the characters in OT narratives are far from perfect and their actions are, too.
6. We are not always told at the end of a narrative whether what happened was good or bad.

7. All narratives are selective and incomplete. Not all the relevant details are always given (cf. John 21:25). What does appear in the narrative is everything that the inspired author thought important for us to know.
8. Narratives are not written to answer all our theological questions. They have particular, specific limited purposes and deal with certain issues, leaving others to be dealt with elsewhere, in other ways.
9. Narratives may teach either explicitly (by clearly stating something) or implicitly (by clearly implying something without actually stating it).
10. In the final analysis, God is the hero of all biblical narratives.

Turn into groups and illustrate one of these points with an OT narrative of how it could be misinterpreted.

Important questions to ask with OT narrative...

1. Is this a good or bad example?
2. Why does the author think it is important to tell us this?
3. What is this connected to elsewhere in the Bible?
4. How is God the hero in this text?

Power of Narrative- share with people around you a favourite Bible narrative

The Old Testament and Holy War

In the 2nd century **Marcion** led a heresy that denied the Old Testament due to the 'cruel and violent God' he found there.

'Holy War'- phrase never used in the Bible

5 things to bear in mind regarding the warfare of Israel in the Old Testament (especially regarding the conquest of the Promised Land)

1. Israel was enacting the Judgment of God

Gen 15:15- when sin reaches its full measure

Lev 18

Joshua 7:1- the 'devoted' things- used about 80 times in the OT

2. We are looking into a very different world

2 Samuel 11:1

David with Bathsheba

David not building the temple

3. The goal was to weed out a false religion

If the Canaanites remain in the land... then the Israelites will be led into false religion.

Deut 6:4-9

Deut 20:10-18

4. Israel was not always on God's side

Joshua 5:13- 14- The commander of the Lord's army

The exiles later

5. God hates needless violence

Cain and Abel

Judgement in Noah's time and how the people were described

10 commandments

Etc.